

**PLANNING COMMISSION
COMMISSIONER'S HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA
MONDAY, March 10, 2014**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers – Chair</i>	
	<i>Dean Enell</i>	
	<i>Mike Joselyn – Vice Chair</i>	
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Jeffery Wallin</i>	
	<i>George Saul</i>	
	<i>Leal Dickson</i>	
<i>District 3</i>	<i>Wayne Havens</i>	
	<i>Beth Munson</i>	
	<i>Scott Yonkman</i>	

Meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Chair Hillers.

ROLL CALL

Mike Joselyn, Wayne Havens, Michael Bobbink, Jeffrey Wallin, Scott Yonkman, Dean Enell, George Saul, Val Hillers

Minutes:

January 28, 2014

Commissioner Yonkman moved to accept the minutes as written, Commissioner Joselyn seconded.

Planning staff present: David Wechner – Planning Director, Will Simpson – Long Range Planner, Brad Johnson – Long Range Planner

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None

NEW BUSINESS –

Public Workshop – Annual Joint Meeting with the Board of County Commissioners and the Island County Hearing Examiner.

- Overview of the 2014 Work Plan
- Overview of the 2014 Annual Review Docket
- Update on the Island County Shoreline Master Program
- Update on the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas work
- Progress report on the Island County Comprehensive Plan Update
- Hearing Examiner's Report – recommendation on improvements to the Island County Code to consider during the periodic Comprehensive Plan update

Director David Wechner acknowledged the annual joint session to discuss issues that have come up throughout the year.

Brad Johnson presented the docket to the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commissioners.

He then provided an updated on the steps that have occurred in the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update:

- The Board of County Commissioners adopted that program locally in 2012.
- There has been a Public Comment Period to Department of Ecology (DOE).
- An Initial DOE review.
 - Following that review Island County prepared responses to all the public comments DOE received.
 - DOE then did a more formal review and has just provided as of last week some preliminary comments regarding the program. They have not yet formally submitted their comments. Most of the issues regard aquaculture and the provisions of the SMP related to aquaculture and specifically fin-fish net pens.

Mr. Johnson then discussed the ongoing Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area Update, which is unfinished work from the 2005 update that the County was ordered by the Growth Management Hearings Board to complete.

- 90% of the Consulting Team's work is completed on this project.
 - Includes much of the background work that was required to be completed.
 - Best Available Science compilation.
 - Needs Assessment.

Final stage of the process, a draft of the proposed Regulations and Policy will be brought to the Planning Commission and then the Board for further discussion shortly.

He then presented information on the progress of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

- Performed the background work, research, and technical analysis required to inform the subsequent update steps has occurred over the past year.
- Adopted a Public Participation Plan that identifies a preliminary schedule for when action will be taken on each of the items in the Comp Plan, which describes how the public can participate in the process.
- Population Projections have been agreed on by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Island County Commissions from 2016 – 2036.
 - By Resolution the Board has allocated that population to each of Island Counties Planning Areas.
- Ongoing work includes:
 - Buildable Lands Analysis.
 - Countywide Planning Policies.
 - Initial Review Phase which will be conducted in 2014.
 - The resulting report to the Planning Commission & to the Board, which will identify any deficiencies or changes that need to be made to the Comp Plan or the development regulations.

- To be followed by an implementation phase where the proposed amendments to the Plan will be developed, then brought to the Planning Commission and then the Board for discussion.
- The Code will need to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and therefore the Island County Code will need to be amended in some instances.
- Then a final adoption process to be completed on or before the deadline in 2016 for completion of this entire project.

Other items discussed:

- Board Chair Jill Johnson asked about parcels being redeveloped.
- The process used in the buildable lands analysis, including the different analysis used by the jurisdictions. Much of it is based on a number of assumptions.
 - Which is further colored by sensitive areas, critical areas, steep slopes and other factors that would need to be taken into consideration to determine how much buildable potential any area really has.

Commissioner Helen Price-Johnson asked whether there would be an economic development component to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Johnson stated the list of deficiencies or items to be worked on are based on the current Comp Plan, however this is being considered. There are various elements in the Transportation, Utilities, Capital Facilities in a lot of respects it would have bearing on where the County wants to expend resources in order to facilitate economic development or encourage certain types of development. It is an integral process for each of these Elements; it is not reviewed in isolation.

Commissioner Jill Johnson asked if there was confidence, that although behind schedule there was sufficient time in the public outreach period and in the revision and final adoption process to finish by the end of 2016.

Mr. Johnson answered by saying there was a lot of work involved in this process, but they tried when designing the public participation plan and schedule, to make a conscious effort to front load a lot of the work in order to provide ample time for public review.

Planning Commissioner Yonkman asked if there was a new deadline on the Fish and Wildlife Update.

Mr. Johnson responded that they have begun the work and should have the final regulations and policies, which will be brought soon to the Planning Commission and subsequently to the Board. Late March or early April would be the anticipated date it would be brought to the Commission.

The discussion moved to the items that are formally on the Annual Review Docket and those that are on the Work Program.

Planning Commission Chair Hillers stated that the item that has come up to the Planning Commission related to these programs is the issue regarding Temporary Use Permits.

Director Wechner said the Temporary Event Venue permits were meant as a stop gap solution to the Temporary Use Permits.

Price Johnson said she wanted to discuss this as well, more as an Economic Development issue for agriculture and open space lands. If there are ways we can build our economy without adding extensive utilities and impacting Capital Facilities by making sure to support our AG lands either through events, wineries, and not just designated AG lands, but open space areas.

Chair Jill Johnson stated she thought it would fit in the Economic Development Element as mentioned; her concern would be to tangent on some of these smaller special interest issues and then lose sight of the entire process that needs to be completed by 2016. This is a pretty process driven time period.

Director Wechner affirmed Mr. Johnson sentiment that these issues would be looked at in a comprehensive fashion, how they might interrelate and support different elements of the economy and how they balance with residential uses in open space and critical areas.

Commissioner Price Johnson said it would be a disservice to wait until the end of 2015 to start to look at this identified code problem. Maybe the first step is to get a look at where those gaps are and where there is some clean up that could be identified so as we move forward we know where those pressing issues are.

Wechner discussed that staff does look at how the code addresses the issue and works backward to address further information,

Hearing Examiner Michael Bobbink stated that in April he will be rendering a rather detailed decision that will be talking about wineries, non-residential uses in the AG Zone, and problems that are built into the Code now. There will be a fairly in-depth analysis, especially regarding wineries, and to some extent Rural Event Centers and small scale tourist uses in the Rural Zone.

There are some short term fixes and there are some long term policy decisions that need to be made about balancing economic uses in the rural zone with residential.

Dave Wechner also discussed another topic that may not appear in the formal list, but is ongoing and that is Code clean up. There is a long list of issues where inconsistencies have been found and the Comp Plan Update is an opportunity to fix those things as well.

Commissioner Dean Enell asked whether there was any vocal opposition to relaxing the uses in the Rural Zone.

Mr. Bobbink stated there is, people do not like change and are concerned about the impacts.

Commissioner George Saul asked if the 2014 Work Plan are ok to do and do they have the 4.4 planners in order to meet this schedule and if not will there be revised numbers presented to the Commission.

Director Wechner responded the schedule is provided to show how much work is involved, the Department does not have the planners for all this work, some of it will end up being done by consultants through grants. A job requisition may be a possibility.

Will Simpson stated Doug Cox from Public Works is currently working on the Transportation Element and Emily Maughan from Public Health are present in the audience, part of the method to achieve all the work needed is to coordinate and use the resources available in other departments. He also gave a brief overview of the policies and work that they will be doing with the focus of Rural Environments and promoting health in those areas through some grant funding.

HEARING EXAMINER'S REPORT

Michael Bobbink discussed some of the items that staff would like to address.

- Vacation rentals, it is allowed outright by Judge Hancock. Generally they are not regulated as long as they are not impacting residential use.
- Abandoned permits especially Short Plats - Whatcom County had that issue and finished with a denial, it had been in for 20 years and after a certain period of time it dies, if you do not have all required information within a timeframe it closes. Went into further detail on other permits and the need for deadlines.
- Special Review Districts need to be put in the Comp Plan. There are overlay districts in Whatcom County. Asked staff to send him those Master Plans and he would sit with staff to discuss. If they are not in the Comp Plan or in an ordinance they are useless.
- Rural Stewardship Plans. The approval criteria is somewhat fuzzy, staff has identified the need for more rigorous approval criteria for those plans.

Other items discussed: Wineries, Agricultural processing, Small Scale Tourist and Recreational Uses, and Economic Development.

Dave Wechner discussed the issue of Boundary Line adjustments versus Plat Alterations. RCW allows adjustments between platted lots and un-platted lots. The outer boundaries of the plat and how much that can be expanded needs to be tightened up. Adjacent property owners should have a pretty clear idea when a subdivision is platted where that subdivision and the lots are going to be located.

Helen Price Johnson stated review of the accident potential zone is regularly asked by the citizens to be added to the docket, particularly around the outlying air field and asked how it is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. She asked how military operations, and what is planned over the planning horizon, are incorporated into the Comp Plan Update.

Brad Johnson discussed that the fact that the GMA contains a provision that requires local governments that share borders with military installations to ensure that their Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations don't impact and are not impacted by military operations. Staff is required to work with the base staff to make sure that we are not creating a hazardous condition for their operations or exposing people to hazardous conditions.

The APZ is certainly the sort of thing that would be created out of that process. This Comprehensive Plan Update is an opportunity for us to look at the effectiveness of those regulations and find out whether or not we are meeting our obligation under that requirement and to work with base staff ensuring consistency between Island County's planning efforts and their operational needs.

Commissioner Price Johnson stated she is trying to reconcile if there are impacts to the community in the EIS which will need a response from the County.

Brad Johnson stated that the Comprehensive Plan is meant to be general in nature and if there is a small detail that came from the EIS we would not be obligated to address it in the Comp Plan.

Commissioner Price Johnson stated that there had been requests to look at ways to adjust the issue particularly around home based businesses. She stated she was glad to know it would be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update. She felt the community would be appreciative of that.

Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification as to whether the APZ was going to be opened up for discussion and allow more uses within it.

Mr. Johnson said that it will take a look at making sure that code is not interfering with base operations. The discussion included the fact that there will be opportunities for revisions that could be more restrictive or less restrictive, depending on what the research finds.

Commissioner Emerson stated that this has been going on for about 3 years. She stated the Navy has mentioned through the course of this time that there are some minor revisions that would be looked at to allow more flexibility.

Commissioner Enell stated that there was a lot of public testimony regarding the citizen's concern regarding the use of their land.

Commissioner Hillers stated that there have been several public hearings but the public feels that they do not receive proper notification.

Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification on the APZ issue, stating that perhaps it needs to be looked at since the types of complaints around the OLF are home based businesses, bed and breakfasts saying this doesn't work well with these types of planes, whereas the conversation up north are asking for additional types of uses. The story is telling itself, where we didn't restrict uses we have complaints, where we did we are not having those same complaints. The lesson

being learned is quite clear in the two different stories being told. People are telling us what uses are not compatible, every time they complain.

Commissioner Enell wanted to make two complimentary items: The new Planning Director is using workshops which he finds helpful. He said he recently was issued a 2013 update of what is going on in the Planning Department, it dealt with permit applications coming into the department, where they were in the process and what was holding them up, how long they were taking and most importantly what improvements were being made to improve things. He felt it was a wonderful direction for government to take.

Commissioner Dickson wanted to second those feelings and appreciates those updates.

Commissioner Johnson wanted to thank the Hearing Examiner and the Planning Commission in their work.

Commissioner Price Johnson also wanted to express her appreciation as well, also on dealing with such tough issues before the Planning Commission and appreciates the thoughtfulness and the commitment to the community. The Planning Commission has the opportunity to be the eyes and ears for the community and to be a conduit for that.

Dave Wechner wanted to state that the staff also appreciates their support. An engaged Planning Commission and an engaged Board helps lead the staff to understand what the expectations are.

Hearing Examiner Bobbink wanted to comment that staff turnover is an issue and if there are things that can be done to retain staff it should be something that should be looked at.

Commissioner Helen Price Johnson stated that in the budget for 2014 did include that very issue, there is a wage study for key positions to try to address that very issue.

Commissioner Havens also shared his sentiment that something should be done to retain staff.

Commissioner Enell discussed impact fees should be addressed and would bring more income into the County.

Commissioner Haven brought up the issue of Maple Grove parking for access to the beach, which is one of the problems with recreational facilities. Folks park on the road and get their vehicles towed because this problem wasn't looked at 50 years ago. Perhaps it can be addressed for future citizens and users of that access.

Michael Bobbink discussed ordinance writing and take advantage of having him review the language in order to avoid future appeals by being more careful and deliberate with the language.

Planning Commission Chair Hillers stated she would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Havens moved to adjourn, Commissioner Yonkman seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Board of County Commissioner's Chair Johnson called for same.

Commissioner Price Johnson moved to adjourn, Chair Johnson seconded, meeting adjourned.

Documents reviewed at this meeting:

Memorandum from Planning & Community Development to the Board of Island County
Commissioners and the Island County Planning Commission, dated 2/28/14 regarding the 2014
Annual Review Docket.
2014 Work Program – Multi Year Schedule

Meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Shaddy